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July 11, 1996, Thursday

FOREIGN DESK

Saudi Exile Warns More Attacks Are Planned

By YOUSSEF M. IBRAHIM (NYT) 696 words

LONDON, July 10 -- A militant Saudi dissident has warned that the terrorists who carried out bombing attacks against American soldiers in Saudi Arabia will also strike at British and French military personnel, adding that those responsible for the bombings in Riyadh and Dhahran that killed 26 "have a deep understanding in choosing their targets."

Speaking in an interview that was held in Afghanistan with The Independent, a British daily, Osama Bin Laden, a scion of a wealthy trading family who was stripped of his Saudi citizenship by King Fahd, said the bombers "hit their main enemy, which is the Americans."

They killed no secondary enemies, nor their brothers in the army or the police of Saudi Arabia," he said. He repeatedly hinted that such attacks will recur.

Speaking of last month's bombing, which killed 19 Americans and wounded more than 300 others, including Saudis and Bangladeshis, Mr. Bin Laden said it was the "result of American behavior against Muslims, its support of Jews in Palestine, and the massacre of Muslims in Palestine and Lebanon."

While taking no responsibility for the attacks, Mr. Bin Laden indicated he was familiar with the circumstances and motives of the plotters.

Saudi officials, who have yet to disclose any of their findings in the investigation of the bombings, said they were not prepared to link Mr. Bin Laden to the attacks yet. But one official said that such an eventuality "cannot be eliminated" in view of Mr. Bin Laden's long association with Arab Islamic militant fighters trained in Afghanistan.

On Tuesday, Defense Secretary William J. Perry said that an "experienced and well-financed terrorist organization" appeared to have given support to the Saudi bombers.

A Saudi official said that Mr. Bin Laden, whose personal fortune is estimated to exceed \$100 million, has provided the bulk of the financing for a vast campaign to distribute pamphlets and cassette tapes

inveighing against the Saudi Government over the past five years.

Until a few weeks ago, Mr. Bin Laden had lived in the Sudan, where he arrived more than five years ago after fleeing Saudi Arabia. In the interview he confirmed that he left that country a few weeks ago for Afghanistan following pressure by Saudi Arabia, the United States and Egypt on the Sudan to expel him.

In doing so, he seems to have joined an increasing number of radical Arab Islamists with access to training bases and hiding places in areas controlled by the Taliban, an Afghan Muslim militia group.

"The safest place in the world for me is Afghanistan," Mr. Bin Laden asserted in the interview, adding that he had spent much time there fighting Soviet troops in the 1980's.

New Reports of Another Attack By The New York Times

WASHINGTON, July 10 -- The United States Embassy in Saudi Arabia said today that it had received fresh reports suggesting that terrorists were planning to attack Americans there two weeks after a terrorist bombing killed 19 American airmen.

The embassy said it was urging the nearly 35,000 Americans in Saudi Arabia to use "extreme caution," to reduce their travels within the country, and to inspect their mail closely.

"Unfortunately the sophistication of the operation behind the June 25 bombing suggests that additional attacks are quite possible," the embassy said in a statement, which was released by the State Department in Washington.

The statement said that new terrorist threats had been received by individual Americans residing in Saudi Arabia and by American businesses operating there.

"The U.S. Embassy continues to receive reports that suggest that there could be further attacks upon official and unofficial U.S. facilities," the statement said. "Some of these reports may have no basis or be only harassment. But it is likely that some of these reports reflect planning for attacks."

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